

REMARKS

Claims 1, 5 and 6 are presented for consideration, with claim 1 being independent.

Claim 1 has been amended to further distinguish Applicants' invention from the cited art. Support for the claim amendments can be found, for example, in FIGS. 2A through 3B and in the specification, for example, on page 16, line 8, *et seq.*

The amendments to claim 1 were not presented earlier as it was believed that the previously presented claims would be found allowable. This Amendment does not add any additional claims. Moreover, the Examiner's familiarity with the subject matter of the present application will allow an appreciation of the significance of the amendments herein without undue expenditure of time and effort. Finally, the Amendment does not raise new issues requiring further consideration or search. Accordingly, it is submitted that entry of the Amendment is appropriate.

Claims 1, 5 and 6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as allegedly being obvious over Okada (WO '354) in view of Kay (WO '914). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 of Applicants' invention relates to a laminating method for forming a laminated layer in the form of a transparent film on a surface of an image on a printed object. The method includes the steps of transferring a laminate having a laminated layer and a heat resistive base material layer to the surface of the printed object for laminating, a rear edge peeling step of peeling off the heat resistive base material layer from a rear edge portion of the laminated printed object, and a front edge peeling step of peeling off the heat resistive base material layer from the

printed object, sequentially from a front edge portion to the rear edge portion in the carrying direction of the printed object. As amended, claim 1 sets forth that when the rear edge peeling step is ended the heat resistive base material layer is not peeled from the laminated printed object at a portion between the front edge and the rear edge of the laminated printed object.

In accordance with Applicants' claimed invention, a high performance laminating method can be provided.

The primary citation to Okada relates to a lamination method having a laminate film comprised of a backing m and a laminate layer e applied to an object k. As best shown in FIG. 8, a front edge of the film is separated at peeling roller 12 before the peeling of the rear edge.

In contrast to Applicants' claimed invention, therefore, Okada fails to teach or suggest a laminating method that includes, among other features, that when the rear edge peeling step ends, the material layer is not peeled from the laminated printed object at a portion between the front edge and the rear edge of the laminated printed object. This is different from the peeling operation in Okada, in which the front edge is peeled off (at point P) and then peeling roller 12 moves to shift the peeling off point (at point S). See FIG. 9.

The secondary citation to Kay is directed to an image enhancement method and is used for its teaching of providing a transparent transfer layer. Kay fails, however, to compensate for the deficiencies in Okada with respect to claim 1 of Applicants' invention as discussed above. Therefore, the proposed combination of Okada and Kay, even in proper, still fails to teach or

suggest Applicants' claimed invention. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 5 and 6 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 is respectfully requested.

Accordingly, it is submitted that Applicants' invention as set forth in independent claim 1 is patentable over the cited art. In addition, dependent claims 5 and 6 set forth additional features of Applicants' invention. Independent consideration of the dependent claims is respectfully requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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